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Africa *the*
INITIATIVE

**Duke Africa Initiative
2012-2013
Annual Review**

Prepared For **Vice Provost of Global
Strategy and Programs**

Africa Initiative Year-End Report, AY 2012-2013

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By all measures, the Africa Initiative (AI) had a successful first year. We established a website, expanded our network/listserv to over 250 faculty and students, and set up a Facebook page. After a lengthy search, we hired a crackerjack administrator who brings energy and savvy to the job. And we organized a bevy of events and activities that marked a first step toward our aim of Africanizing Duke's campus. These activities fell into four categories:

- (1) Salons. We held a series of late-afternoon conversations – two each semester – among faculty from different areas and disciplines: eg, a biologist studying primate behavior in Kenya (Susan Alberts) in dialogue with an English professor interested in nature studies (Ian Baucom); an ethnomusicologist working on the effects of HIV on aesthetic performance in South Africa (Louise Meintjes) with two South Africanist health professionals (Neil Prose, Claire Penn). These salons were hugely successful, offering often eye-opening exchanges between smart people working on similar issues but coming different disciplinary positions.
- (2) Workshops and Conferences. The AI gave out \$63,000 in small grants (up to 8k each) to 10 different groups to hold public events (typically workshops or small conferences) on a range of topics, from resources and health to aesthetics and political economy. The projects selected were interdisciplinary in nature and often vertically-integrated. Again, the events were well-attended, with 50 or more at most of them. (see [here](#) for a list of funded projects)
- (3) Keynote lectures. We sponsored three keynote speakers, Judge Akue Kuenyehia, a Ghanaian justice at the International Criminal Court in The Hague, in November; Chimamanda Adichie, a rising-star Nigerian novelist, in February; and Steven Radelet, former chief economist at USAID, now Professor of Development in the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown, in April. These events were also well-attended, with 50-250 at each.
- (4) Visiting Scholars. We brought three PhD candidates from the continent to Duke for two months (April/May), one specializing in African literature, another in water, a third in lemurs. Thanks to the efforts of our Admin, they were able to acquire plane tickets and visas on short notice, find housing and study space, and quickly begin networking/attending classes and conferences/presenting their work to faculty and students. This program was also a clear success. (see [here](#) for bios of the three visitors)

Next year, we will continue each of these activities, while scaling back in some areas (two instead of three keynotes, eight instead of 10 small grants), so that we can offer course development funds toward the creation of three new classes in fall 2014. We will continue to expand our base and our network (via our listserv and website), while also better integrating students and student groups into our project. Finally, we'll begin applying for external funds to support the Initiative moving forward, building upon the experiences accumulated in year one.